

Working Connections Child Care

December 2006

- *As more low-income parents go to work, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children receiving a Working Connections Child Care subsidy.*
- *In fiscal year 1998, a monthly average of 41,018 children received a Working Connections Child Care subsidy. In fiscal year 2006, 60,744 children were served, a 48 percent increase.*

What is Working Connections Child Care?

Working Connections Child Care is the largest child care subsidy program in Washington State. It covers part of the cost of child care so low-income parents can work, look for work, and in some cases, go to school. The Department of Early Learning administers the program and the Department of Social and Health Services delivers the program through their local Community Services Offices (CSO).

Who is eligible for Working Connections Child Care?

To be eligible for a subsidy, a family must meet the following criteria:

- The parent must be the child's primary caretaker,
- The parent must be working or in an approved work-related activity, such as employment, the WorkFirst Job Search program, self-employment, work-study or certain education and training programs, and
- The family's income must be at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. That's \$2,766 per month for a family of three.

How much does a parent pay?

Parents who receive a subsidy are required to help pay for child care services with a co-payment of at least \$15 a month, depending on family size and income. For example, a single parent with two children earning \$1,500 per month pays a \$50 co-payment. If the family's income increases to \$2,000 a month, the co-payment would increase to \$93.

How can a parent access Working Connections Child Care?

There are a number of ways a low-income parent can apply for Working Connections Child Care, including:

- A local Community Services Office (CSO),
- DSHS Customer Service Center,
- Community college, or
- https://www2.wa.gov/dshs/onlineapp/introduction_1.asp.

Parents can also use an online "Trial Eligibility Calculator" to see whether they might be eligible: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ESA/TEC/>.

Program contacts:

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For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit www.workfirst.wa.gov